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Dated: May 16, 2006 Signature: *[Signature]*

(Raymond W. Augustin)

EXPEDITED PROCEDURE

Group Art Unit: 3738

Docket No.: SPINE 3.0-2144 DIV II

IN THE UNITED STATES PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE

In re Patent Application of: :
Lance Middleton :
Application No.: 10/672,327 : Group Art Unit: 3738
Filed: September 26, 2003 : Examiner: B. E. Snow
For: ARTIFICIAL INTERVERTEBRAL DISC :

AMENDMENT UNDER 37 CFR 1.116

MS AF
Commissioner for Patents
P.O. Box 1450
Alexandria, VA 22313-1450

Dear Sir:

In response to the Office Action dated March 9, 2006, finally rejecting claims 1-16 and 18-21, please amend the above-identified U.S. patent application as follows: